

SEP 10 2008

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Art Unit 3616
Examiner Eric D. Culbreth

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

What is claimed as the invention is:

1. (Currently Amended) A telescoping steering column assembly configured for telescopic relative movement between an outer jacket and an inner jacket, comprising:
an outer jacket with a first end and a second end;
an inner jacket with a first end and a second end, the first end of the inner jacket dimensioned to be received telescopically within the second end of the outer jacket;
a sleeve having a wall which is cylindrical and parallel with the outer jacket and the inner jacket and at least one internal rib which extends inward from an inner cylindrical surface of the wall which is parallel with and spaced a constant distance from an exterior surface of the inner jacket, and at least one external rib which extends outward from an outer cylindrical surface of the wall which is parallel with and spaced a constant distance from an interior surface of the outer jacket, the sleeve and positioned inside of the outer jacket at the second end of the outer jacket;
the first end of the inner jacket positioned within the sleeve inside the outer jacket;
the telescoping steering column assembly configured for relative telescoping movement between the outer jacket and the inner jacket, with an outer surface of the inner jacket in contact with an inner surface of the sleeve, and an inner surface of the outer jacket in contact with an outer surface of the sleeve,
the inner surface of the sleeve which contacts the outer surface of the inner jacket located on the at least one internal rib which protrudes from the wall of the sleeve and is aligned with the longitudinal axis of the sleeve and which is located entirely outside of the outer surface of the inner jacket, and
the outer surface of the sleeve which contacts the inner surface of the outer jacket located on the at least one external rib which protrudes from the wall of the sleeve and is aligned with a longitudinal axis of the sleeve.
2. (Original) The telescoping steering column assembly of claim 1, wherein the at least one internal rib of the sleeve is offset from the at least one external rib of the sleeve.

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3. (Original)The telescoping steering column assembly of claim 1 wherein the sleeve further comprises at least one biasing rib on an exterior of the sleeve wall and which is radially aligned with an internal rib of the sleeve.
4. (Currently Amended) The telescoping steering column assembly of claim 1 further ~~comprising~~ comprising a bonding agent located between at least two external ribs of the sleeve, the bonding agent forming a bond between the sleeve and the outer jacket.
5. (Original)The telescoping steering column assembly of claim 1 wherein a width dimension of an internal rib of the sleeve is greater than a width dimension of an external rib of the sleeve.
6. (Original)The telescoping steering column assembly of claim 1 wherein a combined thickness dimension of the wall of the sleeve, at least one internal rib, and at least one external rib is at least equal to a distance between the outer surface of the inner jacket and the inner surface of the outer jacket.
7. (Original)The telescoping steering column assembly of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of internal ribs protruding from an interior of the sleeve wall at radially spaced locations.
8. (Original)The telescoping steering column assembly of claim 7 further comprising a plurality of external ribs protruding from an exterior of the sleeve wall at radially spaced locations and radially offset from the radially spaced internal ribs.
9. (Previously Presented) The telescoping steering column assembly of claim 1 wherein a surface area of the at least one internal rib in contact with the inner jacket is greater than a surface area of the at least one external rib in contact with the outer jacket.

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10. (Original) The telescoping steering column assembly of claim 1 wherein the wall of the sleeve is flexible between the outer surface of the inner jacket and the inner surface of the outer jacket.
11. (Currently Amended) A telescoping steering column assembly configured for telescoping motion between an inner jacket and an outer jacket and a sleeve located between the inner jacket and the outer jacket, the telescoping steering column assembly comprising:
an inner jacket having a first end and a second end;
an outer jacket having a first end and a distal end, the second end of the inner jacket located inside the outer jacket and extending through the distal end of the outer jacket;
a sleeve which fits between the inner jacket and the and the outer jacket and which extends from within the outer jacket and past the distal end of the outer jacket, the sleeve having a cylindrical wall with cylindrical interior and exterior surfaces, internal ribs which extend from the cylindrical interior surface of the cylindrical wall of the sleeve and contact and are located outside of an outer surface of the inner jacket, and external ribs which extend from the cylindrical exterior surface of the cylindrical wall of the sleeve and contact the inner surface of the outer jacket, whereby the cylindrical wall of the sleeve is spaced from the inner jacket by the internal ribs of the sleeve, and spaced from the outer jacket by the external ribs of the sleeve.
12. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 11 wherein the internal and external ribs of the sleeve are generally aligned with a longitudinal axis of the sleeve, and at least one of the internal ribs of the sleeve is offset relative to at least one of the external ribs of the sleeve.
13. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 11 wherein the sleeve further comprises at least one biasing rib on an exterior of the sleeve which is radially aligned with an internal rib of the sleeve.
14. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 11 further comprising a bonding agent located between the sleeve and the outer jacket.

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15. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 11 wherein a width dimension of an internal rib of the sleeve is greater than a width dimension of an external rib of the sleeve.
16. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 11 wherein a combined thickness dimension of the wall of the sleeve, at least one internal rib, and at least one external rib is at least equal to a distance between the outer surface of the inner jacket and the inner surface of the outer jacket.
17. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 11 wherein a segment of the sleeve extends past the distal end of the outer jacket.
18. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 11 wherein the sleeve is able to flex between the outer surface of the inner jacket and the inner surface of the outer jacket.
19. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 11 wherein the outer jacket is fixed, the sleeve is secured to the outer jacket, and the inner jacket is able to telescope relative to the outer jacket and sleeve.
20. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 11 wherein the inner jacket is fixed, the sleeve is secured to the outer jacket, and the outer jacket and sleeve are able to telescope relative to the inner jacket.
21. (Currently Amended) A steering column assembly comprising:
an inner jacket positioned within an outer jacket;
a sleeve positioned between opposing surfaces of the inner and outer jackets, the sleeve having a cylindrical sleeve wall which is co-axial with the inner jacket and the outer jacket, the sleeve wall being parallel with an outer surface of the inner jacket and an inner surface of the outer jacket, internal ribs which are located outside ~~an~~ the outer surface of the inner jacket and contact the outer surface of the inner jacket, and external ribs which contact the inner surface of the outer

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jacket, whereby a the sleeve wall ~~of the sleeve~~ is spaced from and parallel to the inner jacket and the outer jacket.

22. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 21 wherein the sleeve is fixed relative to the outer jacket.

23. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 21 wherein the internal ribs and external ribs of the sleeve are radially offset.

24. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 21 wherein at least one of the internal ribs of the sleeve is radially aligned with one of the external ribs of the sleeve.

25. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 21 further comprising a bonding agent between the wall of the sleeve and the outer jacket.

26. (Previously Presented) The steering column assembly of claim 21 wherein the sleeve is made of a material which is relatively more flexible than a material from which the inner jacket and outer jacket are made.

27. (Previously Presented) The steering column assembly of claim 21 wherein the sleeve is located substantially within the outer jacket.

28. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 21 wherein a width dimension of the internal ribs is greater than a width dimension of the external ribs.

29. (Original) The steering column assembly of claim 21 wherein a thickness dimension of the wall of the sleeve is greater than a thickness dimension of the internal and external ribs of the sleeve.

30. (Currently Amended) A telescoping jacket assembly for use in combination with a telescoping steering column, the telescoping jacket assembly comprising:

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an outer jacket;

an inner jacket telescopically received within the outer jacket;

a sleeve located between the outer and inner jackets, the sleeve having a wall which is parallel and co-axial with the outer jacket and the inner jacket, and at least two internal ribs which protrude from an interior of the wall and contact an outer surface of the inner jacket and which do not extend through the outer surface of the inner jacket to thereby space the wall from the outer surface of the inner jacket and allow telescoping movement of the inner jacket relative to the sleeve and in contact with the at least two internal ribs of the sleeve, and at least two external ribs which protrude from an exterior of the wall and contact an inner surface of the outer jacket to thereby space the wall of the sleeve from the outer jacket.